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A
L E T T E R
T O
Dr. PRIESTLEY, F.R.S. &c.
IN ANSWER TO HIS LETTER
T O T H E
Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT,
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, AND FIRST
LORD OF THE TREASURY,
ON THE SUBJECT OF
The REPEAL of the TEST-ACT,
AND THE
ABOLITION OF SUBSCRIPTION, &c.

B Y
WILLIAM HUNTER, A.M.
RECTOR OF ST. ANN, LIMEHOUSE, AND LATE
FELLOW OF BRASEN-NOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Thus they hope to compass their Design, which is, instead of
fitting their Principles to the Constitution, to alter and adjust
the Constitution to their own pernicious Principles.

DEAN SWIFT.

L O N D O N:
Printed for Messrs. G. and T. WILKIE, St. Paul's Church-Yard;
and R. FAULDER, New Bond-Street.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

LETTER

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN ANSWER TO HIS LETTER

TO THE

REMARKS WILLIAM L. GAY

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER AND FIRST

LEND OF THE TREASURY

ON THE SUBJECT OF

THE NATIONAL DEBT



ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION

BY

WILLIAM L. GAY

OF THE AMERICAN AND LATE

REMARKS OF THE CHANCELLOR

The author of the above-mentioned work, who is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a Fellow of the American Philosophical Society, has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Cambridge, and is now a member of the Senate of the University of Cambridge.

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1844

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L E T T E R

T O

Dr. P R I E S T L E Y.

S I R,

I N your late disquisition, which you *re-*
duced to an Epistolary Address to the
Prime Minister of this country, you appear
to be under the influence of very quick and
keen resentments; kindled, as should seem,
through a mistaken notion which you had
formed, of the man and his principle.
Your candour, however, we must allow,
is not totally extinguished in that tumult of
B thought,

thought, and blaze of diction, with which you are so eminently gifted. In ~~the~~ outset of your remonstrance you make a fair concession, and deny not the propriety of a change of sentiment, *on farther reflecting upon a subject*. On this principle we confess, be the subject what it may, religious or political, the road is greatly obviated, and the way to truth rendered much more easy. That, in the late great question submitted to consideration, it was adopted by the Minister, you are not so liberal to admit. *Prepossession*, you think, had seized upon the mind, and *the prejudices of education* so cramped its powers, as not to suffer the intermission of those rays of light, which otherwise must, in their fullest radiance, have shone on the matter in debate.

My good Doctor, pray not quite so fast. What you yield to one, you ought certainly to indulge another; and, at least, charitably hope, with all his seeming inattention in your eye, that, in whatever happier point of view he might, at the first, behold the subject,

ject, a maturer deliberation, and a further insight into consequences, might on this, as on any other occasion, become a just ground for an alteration of opinion ; and, hence, a solid proof of *his attention to it*. But so natural is it, in most cases, especially in those of which we have formed a preconceived success, or a decided opinion, to discover a warm, though, sometimes, unreasonable displeasure against whatever opposes the one, or clashes with the other. In the present instance, those who chose to act on other motives, than what appeared to you either generous or judicious, you must, Sir, still allow to be the best judges of those motives. Nor can you go about to deny, or to disprove, whomsoever you may be disposed to honor with the appellation of the *trimmer* of the day, a cordial, unanimous, unextorted concurrence on the issue of the question. However unilluminated by religion, some men may be pronounced by you, yet they have not altogether abandoned their political faith ; on which, as long as they raise a practice

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that offers no violence to one great constitutional point, an alliance of Church and State, however tied down by form, and shackled by system, they have still the happiness to reflect they are not, as in the times of *the dominion of grace*, in danger of encountering such extremes, as to be reduced to the necessity of being called back to the religion of nature, and their old established policy. Men will read, and they will judge for themselves. And that they ought, and have a right so to do, I perfectly agree with you; though, perhaps, not in all matters, with that illimited scope recommended by you: yet, on one of your favourite topics, to give the reins of enquiry their full freedom, let those who may not be deeply tinctured with prejudicate opinions, for a moment, turn over the page of history, and ask their ancestors, why, in the wisdom of legislation, they thought it a requisite step, to affix that barrier to the constitution, whose removal you so studiously attempt. Either there was, or there was not a reason for their doing it. If the latter, it must be
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an egregious piece of folly, and, of course, a cumbersome adjunct. But, if the former, why then may not the same reason now, be assigned for its continuance, as for its being first erected? In what cause it originated, *they* ought to know, if any body, *who gave* rise to its existence; and also whether there has been less peace, quiet, and harmony, among us, since it became a part of the laws of this country. On the contrary, *he* must have been a negligent observer, or, if he has read, he pertinaciously blind, who doth not acknowledge, that not only *no harm*, but *great good*, hath, from it, confessedly, accrued to the state.

Of this, the learned author of the letter gives a pregnant proof in his *own conduct*, by a well-timed publication of the *very patient and submissive principle*, on which the *repeal of the Test-act* may be presumed to have been solicited. For now, since his inglorious *defeat*, he no longer dissembles with you, but throws off the mask, and plainly evinces, as he boldly pronounces,

pronounces, at least, *totidem verbis*, that what he could not effect by *stratagem*, he will by *force*. But *innovations and great changes*, as he shrewdly remarks, are not to be *suddenly set about*. No, that would by no means answer the projected end; as *the people now think, great caution is required, and things gradually to be brought forward*; i. e. certain doctrines to be infused into them, and a new bias to be thrown upon their minds. For, as the Author proceeds himself to observe, by which it appears these are unquestionable pre-requisites, *the people are to be persuaded to think well of a change in matters civil and religious*; and, in this case, the same mischiefs which you now apprehend from a change, might arise from any attempts to prevent a change. My good polemic Doctor, we take your meaning well. You are not yet ready; when you are, then begins the old game. Then solemnly advances (when the kingdom of the saints is about to be re-established) the awful period for the demolition of the establishment, and the destruction of the hierarchy.

chy; but whether in the present or suc-
 ceeding generation, thank God for it, we
 are not as yet ascertained. "However, in
 "the mean while," says this formidable
 "affailant, having lately dispatched an
 "Archdeacon, a Dean, and a couple of
 "Bishops, I shall be refitting my armour,
 "and tempering anew my sword, for far
 "nobler atchievements; the no less ar-
 "duous and *bold* attempt, than that of
 "scaling Heaven and dethroning the
 "Deity; in full expectation that that c—d
 "inhibitory Act of King William, against
 "*impugning the Trinity*, will soon be out
 "of the way. For I should not, as in-
 "deed, my friends, you could not advise
 "me, choose to risk the confiscation of
 "my goods, and imprisonment for life,
 "which I'm yet terribly afraid of; and
 "rather than incur which, I would much
 "sooner, I promise you, come to be
 "h—g—d."

But surely, my good Doctor, you can-
 not be serious in this your way of ar-
 guing. Drop these frightful apprehensions,
 but

but first your *new-fangled schemes*, and these will, of course, vanish. As to the faults you find, and the alterations you would make in the national establishment, no real lover of his King and country, *on your ensuring* the success, and the happier *change* you promise, could, with the least shadow of pretence, oppose himself to them. Indeed, were men likely to be half so good, as you engage they will, even in our day, under your reform, I see no reason why we should not immediately set about the work, as, for our encouragement, you hold out the no necessity there would soon be, for restraints, or compulsory acts of any kind, but that a general enlargement from every obligation, moral and divine, as enforced by the state (the alliance between religious and civil power, being so shockingly unnatural) might with safety take place; that pains and penalties, to awe the profligate; and to command obedience to the laws of God, are idle and useless contrivances; that the religion of Christ is, of itself, sufficient to sway these gentle, pliant natures of ours.

And

And so deeply wrought is the persuasion into the mind of our sagacious author, that he is now impatiently *looking for this better state of things*, in full expectation of its speedy appearance.

The Millenium is not yet come.

And here a question arises, which naturally enough presents itself to the view, whether Christianity, which you mean to strip of its borrowed decoration, and to promulge in the old miraculous way, except you have had a revelation of the above approaching period, was ever intended in the scheme of Divine Providence, as you say, *you see no necessity for a state religion*, to be disjointed from the state. Christ, at his coming, intimated no such thing. Nay, his own example was a direct instance to the contrary; as, by authority supernatural, he practised, and, hence, enforced *obedience to the ruling powers*. His doctrine, it is true, had not at the first, a prodigious number of admirers; nor is this to be wondered at. It came like a religion founded upon it afterwards, equally maligned, though un-

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hurt by your asperity, to fight the obstinate and corrupt prejudices of mankind. Its genius, however, being such as not to damp or retard, but, by the relief it yielded, and the prospect it held out, to reinvigorate and restore the religion of nature, into which, though greatly depraved, the state, both in darker and more enlightened ages, hath been ever grafted; it, through its amiable features, and divine graces, its purity of moral, and energy of principle, effectually operating on fallen man, and apprizing him of his lost dignity, at length caught the eye, drew the admiration, and gained the protection of the Empire. It gave, and as the Supreme Ruler of all, in his wisdom, ordered, it received support. How, Sir, could it ever enter into your head, that things should assume a different shape? or that a national religion should not form an essential part of the blood and juices of national policy, since, in all ages, mercy and vengeance have, in God's administration, overtaken a pure or corrupt public worship? Make Establishment, or a religious Basis, not an essential part of the

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the Constitution, and what a random scheme of things do you propose ! Or again, (for this, I think, is another religious plan of yours) let each person take up his faith, actuated by fancy and caprice, as he would chuse the colour of his cloth, and the *Babel-like* building, might, without a spirit of prophecy, be very soon pronounced a heap of rubbish and *confusion*. Sir, the trial has been *already* made, and whatsoever share your relations and alliances, *the class of Dissenters you avow yourself of, and glory in it*, may have had ; or whatsoever part they may have taken in the rightful restoration, or happier revolution of regal dominion, it was ever thought the safest and best method, after every state quackery and change, to revert things to their first and ancient principle. The pretensions to merit on these, and other occasions, you are so loud about, and, in consequence, the claimed indulgences, and *insisted* on rights to share in place and power, are too well known, and too deeply imprinted on the mind of every true

Briton and lover of his country, to be ever erased.

On this occasion, the argument you draw, in further support of your claim from a *preference being given to those who were ever noted for their disloyalty*, he cannot but observe, comes from you with a very ill grace. If the Scots are the people whom you allude to with such phlegm, I must then take leave to remark, that whatever may have been, in former times, their deluded notions, they do not, that I know of, either in their writings or discourse, attempt to disseminate any poisonous and dangerous opinions. They have a religion, and a religion that doth not disdainfully and proudly disclaim, and spurn at the recovery and support offered to fallen man, in the painful, *bloody* sweat and passion, and alone meritorious sufferings of a crucified Redeemer. They are, moreover, a brave and loyal people, and ought to be taken into the bosom of those with whom they live in good faith and sacred union. The mysterious *Item* you throw out, *that there are objects, in*
which

which the welfare and glory of this country are concerned, to which the Minister would sacrifice this favorite union, or any thing else that might interfere with them, is best understood by yourself. If it is the French treaty and its consequences you mean, why speak by halves, and not roundly out with it? I wonder you laid this check on your spleen, as you had here a fine opportunity of ushering in a prelude to arbitrary power, popery, and the Lord knows what besides; which, could you get the bait to take, might once more make glorious times for you and those with whom you are so nearly and dearly linkt in. On this, or any other ground, your comparative plea of merit therefore, particularly when built on the great assistances yielded by the Dissenters to the Church, which, as they have been, you say, may again be wanted, is such, as, that the less we speak on the subject and perhaps the better.—Only one cannot help remarking, (the observation forces itself upon us) that deplorable indeed must be the situation of that man, who, under misfortune and distress, has no other

[other source of comfort and relief, except in the hand and heart which have ever meditated, and only wanted the power, to execute his debasement and destruction. Suffice it then to observe, that your first step should have been to gain an *act of oblivion*; and, had you therefore shewn more modesty, and less arrogance, and not affected so high a tone, the event of your application had been, possibly, hereafter, less problematic.

But what compliances can you now expect, from that quarter which you have so insultingly reproached?—What magnanimity from those breasts where you have denied any to reside, and to be replete with nothing but fears and jealousies, as, supposing what you say true, they well may, on a retrospect of past usage, though they renounce the horrid consequence you would draw, which they will leave to HIM who asserts Vengeance is mine, *I will repay*. Again, what favor or indulgence from those bodies, whose souls you have as good as damned?

At the same time, such is my opinion of the first of these orders, and of his lenity, that, instead of retorting your indignant language, he will, as in many other instances, look down with compassion on your case, and still revolve it. The second, whom you eye not less contemptuously will shew that charity you seem to want, and, with equal compassion, make due allowances for your present infirmities. And, as to the last, they, poor creatures, can only beg, on the same forgiving principle, that you would pray (for extremes, and in what reign I need not point to so accurate a chronologist, have before met) the souls that are gone, and may perish through lack of knowledge, out of purgatory, and continue your prayers for those which remain, that they, through your aid, may work a speedy reform in their academic discipline.

Whether the Minister who, now sits at the helm, may long continue there or no, I say not, as that depends on the King, and, I suppose, *your strength of hands,*

as you boastingly *placed him in this high sphere.* Whether the Bishops, as one of the three states of the kingdom, may also long hold their right as Peers of the realm, I pronounce not, the church being your favourite victim, and a second detraction of a bench of Bishops, of course, the plan which you have in agitation. The same game played, if they choose to admit of it, a similar fate no doubt may ensue, *and there then may be, as you would prophecy, no more Bishops.* And whether the last will be able to maintain *their* ground and present government, will, in some measure, depend on these given points, and the arguments they are able to hold out against our great Polemic, if they are inclined to hold on the question or questions, any argument at all. And yet, I apprehend, should you continue the challenge, and your compulsory exertions, our academic friends will be forced to speak out at last. They, I mean our Universities, are a kind of keystone, if I may be thus allowed to express myself, to all the buildings, ecclesiastic and

and civil, which, your ideas running counter to mine, not *being fitly framed and put together*, what shall we say or bring forward in defence of those who are to hold up, repair and ornament the several apartments of these seats of learning? I am pushed hard for an answer, and could wish, as they are a peculiar subject of your animadversion, that they would reply, if they have not already done it, for themselves.

If what I am going to say will not give more offence than instruction, I would offer for them a sort of apology, and introduce it too in that illustrating way you seem fond of, by citing, if, not from oral, yet historic story, that there was, *once on a time, an act* proposed and intended for the encouragement of learning, and *that wider spread of knowledge* you have so much at heart in our Universities, to invest the laity, something in the way of your *Elders*, with its property, and to leave ordination, which is a condition, under which, at a certain period, we now hold, totally optional. This it has been said, with what truth judge ye, was

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a state intrigue, for the furtherance of certain designs, which such a collegiate indulgence was to have nurtured, 'till brought to its full maturity. By the wiser and better sort, therefore, the bill was rejected, and matters, we are happy to say, still remain on their old foot.

At the same time to bring something of an approaching nature forward, that you may *not think we stand out for trifles, and make mountains of mole-hills*, with a view of engrossing to ourselves all the good things of the land, to the utter exclusion of other *legitimate claimants*, let me recommend to you a friendly experiment, by doing our Universities the honor of a visit. It will, I will be bold enough to warrant, in my own society, and I could build on others, want no improvement in a social and polite reception, if you can put up with our College-commons, and after beverage. The introduction once made, and the little awkwardnesses at first meeting over, that *freedom of debate*, which you so very justly hold in such high estimation, might better
take

take place than at a distance: as, in all differences, in order to accomplish conciliatory ends, *nothing*, as the old saying is, *like bringing friends together*. Besides, in case of a few bickerings on one grand objectionable point, these might be personally explained away; whereas, wrangling so remotely, serves only to keep alive, and to blow up afresh the coals of discord. Moreover, people can talk what they chuse not to write. And at any rate, as of old, an inviolable regard, you are sensible, must be paid to the *Elusynian mysteries*.

Thus far I will commit myself with you as a *confidante*, and, indeed, it would be unhandsome, if not unfair, not to hint, that previous to your admission, as a brother of our sacred rites, which, when you come better to understand, and more nearly approach, will lose all that *Terror* which they are at first apt to inspire, a few pre-requisite compliances will be demanded of you.

First, That you renounce or qualify, as well as you can, your present faith.

Secondly, That you affirm you are not, and promise you never will be, the religious tool of any disappointed factious junto, that now exists, or may hereafter spring up in this country.

And, lastly, that you will never, at any time, reproach and vilify men of another persuasion, but let every one peaceably enjoy the communion of which he professes himself a member. And that, moreover, you will continue true and faithful to the society into which you are adopted.

Now, Sir, these are some of the conditions, which will be required at your initiation, and which I leave to your consideration. Other points, of a doctrinal nature and our subscription of them, with the addition of extraneous matter, which you take occasion to introduce, and object to us, I shall touch upon bye-and-bye. I would only just observe, that the
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reasonableness of this mode of proceeding cannot, I should imagine, be fairly disputed. I should think it extremely admissible on your own ground, and that were it only for peace and safety's sake, it admirably applies in your own words, as when you say; *Whatever mischief any person may intend to do me, I never think of using any precaution against him, if I know that it is not in his power to execute his intention.* Perfectly right, and logically reasoned; as, in this case, to entertain fearful apprehensions would be equally as wise as to dread and fly from the furious assaults of a savage, or a madman, whom we beheld chained down to the ground. For here we must admit, that the power of doing harm is the same as destroyed. How? Why, by a restrained ability, and a prudent precaution in securing the party. To this end, no doubt, in order to controul the imperious passions of mankind; and to keep them in due bounds, and from flying out into outrageous acts against each other, and thereby to still general fears and suspicions, have restraints been

been ever wisely ordered in all civilized states. And for what reason it has been thought proper to throw these on a part of this community, *that part* of the community need not be informed, but may with ease collect the reason from the exercise of the same, and far severer restraints when it was in power, and had the upper hand. The rulers then had their subscriptions, tests, and touchstones, and why now to be abrogated? The law *may*, perhaps, hereafter, like that of our *good neighbours*, the States General, relax its discipline on religious tenets, which no generous mind could be averse to. At the same time it would but ill consult the public tranquillity, if, contrary to their practice, it did not, also, make due provision for the secure exercise of authority both in Church and State. Whence, as things are now circumstanced, to dispute from the non-admission into the Magistracy or Excise, except under certain restrictions, to the non-admission into our Universities, or Church, can be no inconclusive argument. Conditions are required from

from the one, and it is right they should not be dispensed with in the other. Many indeed seem not of that nicety as if they looked for it; *Men, you say, in other respects very conscientious, though you approve not the practice,* from the apprehension, most probably, that occasional conformity has too much the appearance of making conscience stoop to convenience. Be this as it may, these are our terms, and if your scruples, and those of your society, forbid you to close with them, either in part or in the whole, *you are still not without your remedy.* I mean only to insinuate, that if you cannot in all good conscience accede, you can quietly recede. Leave us, as proprietors of the demesne, to cultivate the soil as we please. You sustain no injury, though loudly complained of, by the least alienation of right or property. Of the two, upon the credit of the rich description you give, of *your fertilizing streams of science,* your's is by far the most enviable situation. Whilst you, therefore, enjoy the salutary herb, and the purer stream, let us, in our wilder-
ness

ness of learning, if we chuse it, sicken and die over the noxious weed and the *stagnant pool*.

But four as are the grapes, and polluted the fount, you would still be tasting. I have already pointed out one way of yielding you a partial gratification. The difficulty is, how to furnish out a table for your full and complete relish. An expedient strikes me. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded*: which, by the help of a certain figure, may be understood, (or take it in what sense you please) that we instantly set pen to paper, with a sincere and cordial resolve, on a purer reform of ordinances, something in the way of your recommended garbling. This, I own, at the present distance we stand, should an interview not prove successful, is, indispensably preparatory to your happier introduction to our seats of learning. For, until these insurmountable impediments, the Articles, the Trinity, and the Sacramental Test, of which you have formed
most

most frightful apprehensions, are utterly abolished, you cannot, for the world, think of infecting your principles, and endangering your safety, by these our pernicious and *damnable* doctrines.

Here, to make once more a serious pause, though it is with some difficulty, (for you talk of laughing, and why may not we?) that I command my muscles; so far, if such be your meaning, I am not abhorrent to your way of thinking, that too great purity of worship and knowledge of the Object of our Devotion cannot be aspired to, would we offer up to the Deity a proper and reasonable service. To this end all religious fopperies, on the one hand, and fanatic rant on the other, are carefully to be avoided: *neither* of which, I would flatter myself, are justly chargeable on the Articles;—*neither* on the Trinity;—*neither* on the Sacrament, as professed and administered by us, in the way, I apprehend, they are generally understood.

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Were I disposed to make a concession, and to depart at all from what is here advanced, it should be in an expression of concern for one symbolical profession we retain, at which some weaker brethren may have been rather offended. Although it must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that every one has an undeniable right, provided he keeps clear of derogating from the Divinity, to form his own ideas of the nature, and essence of the object of his adoration. Nor can you, Sir, except you withhold from others, which is no new case, the tolerated privileges you so boldly plead for, blame any one else, if such is his serious and fundamental persuasion, who frames his devotional faith either on the hypostatic union of the Deity, though lost in silent wonder and contemplation on the inexplicable *I AM*; or another, whose creed, on a more rational basis, as he may conceive, resolves the unity of the Godhead into his supreme power and dominion over all, *ὁ ψιλος*
ωαννης also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of us all, and at
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the same time attempts no injury to the satisfaction of his *Saviour*, nor diminution to the sanctifying graces and operations of the *Holy Spirit*, and *their* respective

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This, I say, you can no more do than they, who, having formed their tenets as nearly as they can, on Scripture doctrine, can avoid censuring, and holding in abhorrence, the principles of that man, who braves Heaven with his blasphemy, and would cruelly rob the sincere and humble believer, of his best hope, comfort, and expectation. Well may it not raise our wonder that men of this order and complexion, whom I say not, nor of what school, a Christian one I cannot say, after the declaration which hath been lately made, should be averse to the subscription of Articles, and the participation of a Sacrament, so foreign in their nature to their refined and polished taste — their independent notions — and bold rejection of a Saviour. Men above all ordinances, human and divine, and who dare

question the authority of God himself, when he commands *all men to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*. Great encouragements these for making *trials and changes*, and no less rational a foundation for a blessed reform. *Much, very much indeed*, as you say, remains to be done, in this case, and this would be doing it to some purpose. If the stream of our religion is impure and polluted, in God's name let the philtration of it be left to the Doctors within its own province. To call in foreign aid, or to submit its repurgation to hands like your's, must have pretty nearly the same effect that thunder has upon liquors, in keeping the dregs afloat and uppermost; besides another certain and inevitable consequence, of impregnating that stream with a *deadly tincture*. Far better we remain as we are, and continue to subscribe those doctrines we profess, in the main incontestible, although liable, like every thing human, perhaps through the variety of Scriptural opinion, to mistake and imperfection, rather than, by the hazard of a change, be necessitated to take up
either

either with *a chaos* of religion, or, what is most probable, sit down with *no* religion at all.

But, surely, we have been a long time in the dark, and are, if all is true that you say, still lamentably enveloped in the clouds of error, and the night of ignorance. Our ancestors, men, I believe, of as strict conscience and sound learning as their posterity, were differently persuaded, when they built, on these doctrines, the present bulwarks of the Establishment. And the succeeding race, to the present day, whom, in our various societies, allowing for a few malecontents, every where to be found, the same sentiments have pervaded, see no cause, nor will, I should presume, why the same security should not be continued; as well as be peculiarly designed for a *Test* to be holden out, of the principles and persuasion of the academic, *in his novitiate*. Whatever seeming objection may lie against some points, (for mankind can never be brought to think always alike) of our liturgical forms, this can by no means operate
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to the absolute supercession of all subscription at the time you mention—more especially when the young subscriber no more proposes the compilers, if ambiguous, as his interpreters, than he would you for his parent theologian and guide, when your new-broached system may come more abroad, and gain firmer footing in this self-captivated world,

Those who, with any tolerable degree of attention, have considered the doctrines they subscribe, and have taken a comparative view of your opposite opinions, cannot be long at a loss on which side to enlist themselves, were it only from a misrepresentation of those doctrines you so wantonly insult. To instance in one point more, which to you appears an objection of an insuperable nature, in the fall of man, *that God made choice of some to be saved, whilst he left others under an irreversible decree of damnation*, which you have the modesty to affirm a matter of our subscription, and which affirmation I have the honor, under every reserve of Christian decency,

decency, to acquaint you, is a most irreligious untruth. Review, once more, if you are not afraid of becoming a convert, the ninth, seventeenth, and thirty-first articles. In the conclusion of the first, you will there find it taught, that *there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized*; and we are, therefore, from the whole tenor of the next article, on predestination and election, naturally led to believe, that this election can no more extend to any determinate body of mankind *irreversibly*, than the selection of the Jews, in preference to any other people, who were themselves afterwards cast off because of unbelief. As to any one being *irreversibly* concluded under a sentence of damnation, there is no such expression through the whole of the Articles; and I can only imagine it to be inferred by those who *feelingly* perceive themselves under a decree *e contrario*, from a conviction *that they are curious and carnal persons, and lack the Spirit of Christ*. — Characteristics therein spoken of, as belonging to those, on whom, in their presumed state of despair, the
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final sentence may seem already to have passed; and to whom, as being *sold under sin*, the universal advantage in Article thirty-one, can, I am afraid, never extend effectually, nor any real interest be had under such a state of dereliction, in the offering of Christ once made, which is therein called, (with some relief, I hope, to our doctrine of absolute reprobation) *that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual*. If you call this as bordering on an irreverfible decree, I deny not the charge, but moft cordially join if-
 fue with you on fuch a doctrinal con-
 ftruction.

In whatever light you may view the fall of man, I do not fee how the more gra-
 cious attributes of the Deity can be quef-
 tioned (with the prefervation of the free
 agency of man) to permit a creature, even
 under the fore-knowledge of its deftiny,
 to purfue, of two roads, that which ap-
 pears to him the moft eligible, efpecially
 after having been affured of the different
 termination

termination of each ; the one, in perfect happiness, the other, in solid misery. That God foresaw the fall of man, with the involved consequences, and the use mankind would make of the several abilities and opportunities yielded them, in all ages, together with the fatal, or happier decision, that must, of course, take place, upon their bad or good conduct, you may controvert if you please, and limit the Attributes, as you would the Essence of the Deity, to any size and extent, that best comports with the notions you may chance to take up. For my own part, though you may repudiate the doctrine as Calvinistic, and blended with predestination, this notwithstanding, on such ground, *after the straitest sect*, I profess myself a Predestinarian.

And you, Sir, in respect to *the fall of man*, and the *taint ex traduce*, with the destination of all, under the foreknowledge of God, from their respective demeanour, I would beg to lay your hand upon your heart, and ask yourself whether the Omniscience, and Prescience of the Deity, can

be said, *partially*, or *inequitably* to imply a predestinating power, over the obstinate or concurrent will of a rational free-agent, to whom the fairest, and most unexceptionable motives have been objected for the influence and regulation of his conduct. Opinions these, and others of a similar colour, whether by those within, or without the pale, opposed as anti-scriptural, which no true son, of what we call the truly reformed Church, will deliberately reject, or reluctantly subscribe.

To proceed then with one main question in hand, as *to the rightfulness of subscription of the doctrines we profess*, the case is obviously this, and hath, ever, with great truth, been maintained, that no form, as a rule of faith, considered, as it must be, in some sort human, and of course, not infallible, can, however, be properly subscribed, except *in the general*, as some may think; but I rather apprehend, *on the whole*, it be directly, or by induction, reconcilable to the revealed word of God.

No person, who has about him any true, and vital religion, will therefore, though probably not in the strict sense of the composers of that rule, in all its parts, (for I should presume no one tied up to a certain interpretation, but indulged a due latitude) subscribe, however, under a warped bias of the text or context of Scripture, in order to conciliate it's approbation. It has been said, and by casuists of distinction, "that subscription does not imply a thorough approbation, and thorough acknowledgment of the truth of every sentence in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, in the original sense of the framers," but that something, as mankind, I say, cannot always think alike, particularly on the more intricate, abstruse and mysterious points of religion, should be left to their own cool and deliberate choice. On this ground, I humbly conceive, any one may, with safety, yield his assent and consent to our Articles. And this, I apprehend, is still the mode of exposition on the requisition made at the years of pupilage in our Universities.

And, at a riper age, no doubt, young men will judge for themselves.

Here, at the approach of that solemn season of entering into the Church, when the mind is more emancipated, and at liberty to form its own decisions, provided they are not of the number of those, *who having the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof*; they may, I presume, without that tampering with conscience, a stigma you would fasten on our principles, *in attempting to reconcile the belief of one doctrine with the subscription to another*, with as much safety, approach hands, extended from the lawn, as those you see peeping from under a cloak. It is true, they may, nevertheless, in some points, (as who is not liable to error?) be mistaken, but still not culpably so. The head may be wrong, and yet the heart right. It is not the understanding, but the will, which constitutes the crime. Supposing therefore scriptural authorities numerically, or effectually equal, for or against an opinion,
that

that man, who has been assiduous and sincere in his search after truth, and not too tenacious of a certain hypothesis, will, I doubt not, have all due allowance made him, and be viewed by the All-searching eye, in no less favourable a light, than *another*, who, in this maze of human error, hath hit on the right side of the question, admitting even his views equally honest and sincere. Do you, Sir, assert the contrary? Assert, indeed, you may, but prove it you cannot; although, from the way you bear yourself, we might take for granted, you carried in your pocket the fullest credentials of your being *e Jovis secretioribus*.

On the whole—though hold, there's something yet behind, which I would just glance at before we dismiss the subject, as you appear, not uninviciously, to dwell upon it. I here allude, in the first place, to the constitutional provision of the established Clergy by tythes, against which you seem to contend with much acrimony and great want of temper. I shall only
here

here reply, that if you are contented with extorted subscriptions, and casual contributions, we think ourselves in much happier, though perhaps in not better circumstances, that the law has made us less dependent for our daily bread. We take thankfully that provision, as we offer up cordially that form of devotion which our rulers have prepared in both cases; and *neither do we devour widows' houses, nor, for a pretence, make long prayer,*

The following story, (I believe an honest Dean's) is at your service, *and the application is left to yourself.* I remember a fanatic preacher, who was inclined to come into the Church and take orders, but, upon mature thought, was diverted from that design, when he considered that the collections of the godly were a much heartier, and readier penny than he could get by wrangling for tythes,

In good truth, Sir, I see no just ground you have for complaint, either in spirituals or temporals, but might with much comfort

fort, *fit down each man, under his own vine, and his own fig-tree*, and thankfully receive your present gracious dispensations from an indulgent Prince. No: this falls short of your demand, and you are still importunate: assert there *are many things more you conceive yourselves entitled to, and if not granted, you shall endeavour to relieve yourselves*, contending that you are *a part of the community*, and for great merit have received great injuries.

The first position you make, in defence of your pretensions, we readily allow; that you *are a part of the community*, and a confounded unsound part too. A limb of it, which, should it continue it's unfavourable and incurable symptoms, had better be lopp'd off, as in chirurgical cases, than that a mortification should seize on the whole body politick. Respecting *your injuries*, I know of none that you have received, except you comprehend them in those exemplary chastisements, which the law, in proportion to the crime, has ever inflicted on all public delinquents: and for *your merits* let the *two noted aras*, by which you would put them upon their trial, themselves speak out,
and

and unreservedly give their evidence. Nay; if you please, *a third*, about which you are silent, of still greater notoriety. But the periods on which you build, and *menace* your claim, as I before intimated, I shall *now* say nothing more of, than in the bare addition of a wish that your, and the illustrious virtues of that class of dissenters, of which you make such proud boasting, may be found such, as to mitigate *an old political sentence*: and thereby, under less awful, though possibly, not less painful restrictions, such as an oath of allegiance to the present family on the throne, and to the non-disturbance of government in church, and state, throw open the door to more *emolumental*, if not more *spiritual* company. Whence you will be better enabled to contribute your *quota* towards the maintenance of that religion, which was originally provided for you, and withal enjoy the luxuries, and *superfluities* of your own righteous feasting. *The dues arising from marriage* would hence not be an object to you, but be swallowed up in the vortex of more ambitious and advantageous thought. But still you urge the
Quakers

Quakers as a precedent. Their case and yours do not, in any wise alike apply. They have no religion, or next to none, and we therefore abandon them to themselves. At least, we rank them amongst the *adiaphora* of civil life; objects nor of censure, nor applause. We wish not to say the same of you. If therefore you will, for a while, rest contented, and quit your *bankerings* after the bishops estates, and the dean, and chapter lands, things will be in time perfectly modified to your taste; when, if we will but make the trial so eagerly pressed by you, it will be found, as you classically, and in figure sweet descant, that it would be as ridiculous to raise banks against the river Thames, through an apprehension of its irruption upon the town, as it would be to surround ourselves with fears from a dreaded torrent of a Dissenter's innovations on the constitution.

Good Sir, I take your *petitio principii*, and and I would not willing err, *ab ignorantia Elenchi*. And can you conceive, had a trial been made on this amusive ground, and you

less peremptory in your demands, nay not expectant at all on the score of your patriotic and virtuous pretensions, but had acted on motives entirely pacific, that, after such dear-bought experience, we were again to be lulled into a fatal security? To accommodate with you upon presumption, would be wise indeed. This is the prominent feature of your piece, and what, notwithstanding your laboured industry to destroy the effect, you would wish still to captivate. But that man must shut his eyes against the full blaze of truth, who doth not see through the whole of the design, and is not clearly apprized of the poignancy of the food that must reach your taste.

However, to do you justice, it hath frequently been the fate of men to fall a sacrifice to wily schemes, and not to meet with such fair dealing in an enemy. But you, really, forcibly exemplify, even in its inverted state, the axiom you recommend to the Minister, that *honesty is the best policy*, as it stands connected by
you

you with our respective situation. For, in broad day-light, and with great consistency of thought, we must needs say, you proclaim, that if you are admitted within our lines, we are in no danger from you;—that in case of a parley we are signally so;—and, on the refusal of such parley shall receive no quarter.

Sir, we hold ourselves much obliged to you for this political piece of advice, and shall improve it to the best advantage, in particularly guarding ourselves against that *body of men, who, in due time, you say, will not be wanting to have the head, the heart, and firmness of nerve, to do whatsoever may be thought necessary towards your projected changes and reformatiions.*

Before the onset begins, we as generously return you word, that we are not without our entrenchments, deep and strong; neither without our watch-tower, though the latter is, we own, somewhat in a state of decay, and has been, ever since we began to

*be less mindful of those times when the over-
 flowings of ungodliness made us afraid:—Of
 that dreadful inundation on this city by the
 troublous and poisonous streams of Geneva
 principles and doctrines, which, for nineteen
 years together, laid his country under a
 general devastation of both purse and con-
 science. But we will leave the water for
 wood, though I am afraid the prospect will
 not much improve upon us. And here
 meets the eye a plant of a most extraordi-
 nary growth, it is called the Unitarian
 plant, grafted into a Socinian stock; and, as
 the cultivator assures us, so deeply rooted,
 and of so strong a constitution, and such
 quick growth, that it bids fair soon to rival
 the trees of the Lord, even the cedars of Li-
 banus, which he hath planted. From it,
 when come to maturity, plenty of shoots
 are recommended, as transplants into our
 academic gardens, under a predicted ex-
 cision of our barren fig-tree, and a dis-
 graceful ejection of the present useless
 husbandmen from their unfruitful vine-
 yard.——We have tasted, it is true, of the
 waters*

waters of Lethe, but are not quite drenched; nor do I think we shall touch the forbidden fruit.

Most venerable Sir, to take my leave of you, all I shall further add is, that if when the proprietors of the estate have sown good seed, the Devil does come and sow tares, they can only, in the same strain of surprize, as the sower, on another occasion, from the recollection of having sown such seed, cry out, whence then hath it tares? withal affirming, that an enemy hath done this! But, as far as human wisdom and precaution, under God, can direct, they will not sleep, nor be off their guard. But they will, from the conviction that he will flee from them, boldly resist that Devil. They need not be afraid nor ashamed to meet you, on any ground. Ashamed, indeed, as might another forehead, they may be of you and your cause. But, as to timidity, were either Premier or Prelate so (in your sneering language) to have caught his fears, as crouchingly to look up to you, or your combination, for the honourable

nourable mention of his name, then ought it to be the wish of every true Briton, that they may both rank with the famous, or rather infamous crew of worthies, of the last century, to whom, I suppose, in the conclusion of your Address, you allude; and be, like them, blended in the mass of republican corruption, that hath ever, from nearly the first accession of Queen Elizabeth, to the present day, infected the principles, and contaminated the very air of this country.

I am, S I R,

Your most humble servant,

W. HUNTER.

London,

May 1, 1787.

4 OC 58

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 2, line 16, for intermission, read intromission.

Page 26, line 25, for *waraxparax*, read *waraxparax*.

Page 33, line 12, for and, read or.

Page 37, end of line 3, insert, though wrong.

Page 38, line 3, for independent, read independant.

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THE SOUND OF THE GOSPEL
SALVATION ATTAINABLE BY ALL WITHIN

FOOTNOTES

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